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GREECE AND THE MONROE DOCTRINE

By Felix Morley

In last week's "Not Merely Gossip" we called the attention of our readers to reports of a movement designed to overthrow President Grau San Martin. "The Cuban President," Mr. Hanighen noted, "faces increasing and widespread criticism on the score of weakness towards the formidable Cuban Communist movement."

"Not Merely Gossip" was, as always, careful to avoid sensationalism. "Responsible observers," said Mr. Hanighen, "are inclined to discount much -- but not all -- of this talk." For the sake of an important argument, however, let us assume that there is now developing a serious Cuban counterrevolutionary plot, designed to liquidate the very energetic Communist Party in that country.

Let us further assume something which, if the premise is sound, would be quite probable -- that Moscow would regard any overthrow of the present regime in Cuba as extremely undesirable. Let us also assume that, on hearing reports of an impending Cuban coup d'état, Stalin cancels a scheduled cruise in the Black Sea, summons a meeting of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. and lays before them a plan prepared and approved by Foreign Minister Molotov.

This plan -- of course we are still assuming -- would point out that Cuba is an important outpost of the "democratic" and "anti-Fascist" community of nations which Moscow is endeavoring to build. It would argue, very logically, that Russia cannot afford to see a "liberal" government, sympathetic to collectivism, displaced in Havana by a regime which the Russians would describe as "an American puppet State." It might even point out that the United States has been throwing its weight around rather aggressively in Latin-American affairs, with some State Department officials electioneering in Argentina while other State Department officials denounce Russian electioneering in Poland.

As a result of this undoubtedly one-sided picture the Russian Council of Ministers might decide to render emergency financial assistance to the present Cuban Government. It might even be decided to convey the funds to Havana as part of a good will mission of Russian warships.

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To prevent misunderstanding only former American warships, freely turned over to the Soviet by the Roosevelt Administration, would be used to carry the red flag and the red gold into Havana harbor.

The question is how the American people would react to such a hypothetical action. The answer is easy. We would blow our top.

II

There is no doubt that in the case depicted the Congress, with the American press, pulpit and public in all but unanimous support, would with one voice announce a violation of the Monroe Doctrine, demanding immediate action to oust the Russian warships (even though American built) from the Caribbean. And if a Cuban government were so ill-advised as to accept the proferred financial aid from Moscow, it would probably be thrown out too.

Yet this hypothetical Russian action would be a fairly exact parallel to action which the United States Government is now contemplating in Greece. And if we intervene in Greece, in the manner now being advocated, it is very dubious that the International Court of Justice -- if called upon for an opinion -- would find any violation of the Monroe Doctrine in a parallel Russian intervention in Cuba.

The original Monroe Doctrine, as is clear to anybody who will take the trouble to read it, has two essential parts, as inseparable from each other as the two sides of the sheet of paper on which these words are written. The most frequently quoted part of the doctrine is that which declares that the United States would regard any attempt by European Powers "to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." From this it follows that any European move to exercise any control over any American Republic would be regarded "as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States."

Balancing this assertion of national interest, however, is a parallel and inseparable declaration of national restraint. Though interwoven in the same text the following passages of the Monroe Doctrine are, for some reason, much less familiar to present-day American ears than those quoted above:

> "In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense. . . . Our policy in regard to Europe . . . is not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government de facto as the legitimate government for us."

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III

The complementary nature of the self-assertion and the self-denial in the Monroe Doctrine is obvious. In dealings between nations, as between individuals, there is no moral justification for telling others to mind their business unless one is willing to mind one's own. As expressed by J. Reuben Clark, Under Secretary of State in the Hoover Administration, in a "Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine," published by the Department of State in 1930:

> "The principles of the non-extension of the European political system to this hemisphere and interposition in the affairs of Latin-American Republics, are mere corollaries of the political separation of Europe and America."

The diplomatic record supports the contention that one of the two pillars of the Monroe Doctrine is no political intervention in Europe on the part of the United States. When President Monroe asked Jefferson's advice, before delivering his famous message, the latter wrote from Monticello, on October 24, 1823: "Our first and fundamental maxim should be, never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe; our second, never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with cis-Atlantic affairs."

President Polk, reaffirming the Monroe Doctrine on December 2, 1845, told Congress that:

> "It is well known . . . that this Government has never interfered with the relations subsisting between other governments. We have never made ourselves parties to their wars or their alliances . . . we have not mingled with parties in their domestic struggles. . . . We may claim on this continent a like exemption from European interference."

Half-a-century later, in the note of July 20, 1895, applying the Monroe Doctrine to the acrid boundary dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana, Secretary of State Olney summarized its purpose in a statement that "complete European non-interference in American concerns would be cheaply purchased by complete American non-interference in European concerns."

Finally, as recently as July 6, 1940, when America was reluctantly preparing to become a belligerent in a second World War, Secretary Hull emphasized the continuing validity of the Monroe Doctrine as follows:

> "The Government of the United States pursues a policy of non-participation and of non-involvement in the purely political affairs of Europe."

IV

At the tortuous secret conferences where Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt partitioned the post-war world, all of Eastern Europe, with the exception of Greece, was in effect turned over to Soviet control. Because of the strategic importance of the Hellenic peninsula, bolstering Turkey and flanking Britain's lifeline to the Far East, Churchill insisted that the Russian tide should stop at the Greek frontier. But

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Stalin has never really accepted that arrangement. Greece, to Russian thinking, is as properly within the Soviet sphere of influence as Cuba is within that of the United States. And there is no doubt that the Communist-dominated EAM has been consistently stimulated by Moscow as a spearhead for the eventual Russian domination of Greece.

The British Government, which has kept troops in Greece since the Germans were driven out, can no longer afford this drain on Britain's meager and dwindling resources. It has urged the Truman Administration to bolster the shattered economy of Greece, which could be a temporary assignment. But involved with this is the more invidious task of blocking the Russian ambition to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean. The adoption of such a policy by the United States would be resented in Russia in much the same way that a Russian attempt to keep the United States from dominating the Caribbean would be resented here.

Before taking steps which are certain to create a bitter enmity the prudent man will count the costs. He may well decide that overpowering reasons make it necessary for him to invite a hostility which is the lesser of two evils. But he will not delude himself into thinking that the argument is one-sided, especially if the enemy he is about to make is in a position to do him serious injury.

It must also be asked why the problem of Greece should not be placed under the corporate control of the United Nations, with Russia having as much say in the matter as ourselves. Such a policy would not invalidate the Monroe Doctrine, but would merge it in the larger system of world security which we were told the United Nations would create. We can scarcely blame Russia for ignoring UN, in the case of Iran, for instance, if we are similarly indifferent to collective action in the case of Greece.

But the course now advocated by the Administration seems to be one which will both ignore the United Nations and destroy the validity of the Monroe Doctrine. In effect we are asserting that we can meddle in what Russia considers its sphere of influence while maintaining that the Russians must not attempt identical tactics toward us.

It is essential to realize that this course, if followed, is likely to end all hope of amity between the United States and Russia. Perhaps that is inevitable. If so, we should face the issue without further equivocation.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. IV, NO. 11

By Frank C. Hanighen March 11, 1947

"In the parliament of the present every man represents a constituency of the past," said James Russell Lowell. Applying this epigram literally to the Eightieth Congress, one should add, "of the all too recent past." The reason for the present unpopularity of Congress may be found in the temper of the constituents, affected more than they realize by the political habits of the past fourteen years. While a number of factors -- prejudices of reporters and commentators, totalitarian "liberal" propaganda, the inexperience of the majority leadership -- have contributed to the situation, there is, we think, a more pervasive influence. That is the fact that the country as a whole is not accustomed to normal representative government. Twelve years of patronizing "fireside talks," of acceptance of slick phrases instead of thoughtful proposals, of acquiescence in emergencies, of the "let-the-President-do-it" mentality, have left the body politic unused to the sober, undramatic, unhurried business of deliberation and agreement which is representative government. A typical widespread reaction may be seen in the cartoon of the Washington Post (March 11): several fat legislators dozing in their seats, and the caption "I Hear Things Are Getting Pretty Critical."

Granted that the Republican leadership in the Senate has not distinguished itself (the picture might be rosier if there were a comfortable, instead of a slim, majority). Granted the mismanagement of the Lilienthal case. Granted that too many Senators are attitudinizing in preparation for 1948. Yet even the Washington Post in the same issue was constrained to say, editorially: "In an analysis of the reasons for the waning popularity of the Republicans, as indicated by the Gallup poll, Robert C. Albright of the Post's staff has pointed out that the speed of the new Congress is 'up to any mark in recent years'"; and to urge Congress not to be "stampeded into turning out half-baked measures by popular clamor for immediate action."

It would not be surprising to learn that the most impatient constituents include as many Republicans as Democrats. The acquired totalitarian psychology is confined to no one party. One may recall how many business figures and Republicans fell for the Mussolini myth in the Twenties. In fact, an old suspicion revives: that much of the conservative criticism of Roosevelt "the dictator" came from those who would have applauded a conservative "dictator." In this situation therapy is indicated, but not only for Congress. Curative education is needed for what amounts to an atrophy of civic intelligence.

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The other day a hardened old Senate secretary, leaning against a particularly horrible piece of Capitol statuary, gave forth the following ugly analysis: "It's all a plot, this Greece business. Truman's adopting the tricks of FDR. He found he couldn't beat the Republicans on lowering taxes, cutting the budget, firing the bureaucrats. He hadn't the votes. So, now he's going in for emergencies, and foreign danger. He figures he can get what he wants that way."

The criticism seems unfair to the President. The picture relayed to this column from White House sources is quite different. A harassed Chief Executive is confronted with notes, reports, analyses of experts. He takes a trip to Mexico on important public business, is called home, back to the same difficult problems. He is petulant with his Cabinet because it has not made the decisions while he is gone. And Secretary Marshall departs for Moscow, leaving no positive recommendations. Truman would rather not make a decision himself. So he gropes blindly,

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but sincerely. No Harry Hopkins whispering cynically at his elbow; no personal delight in slipping something over on the people or Congress. Probably Harry Truman is not different from any ordinary citizen who tries to weigh the difficulties.

But he must choose. And the decision on Greece can inexorably tie in with the same objective as that attributed to him by the above-mentioned observer. Members of Congress who do not shrink -- some do, some don't -- from pondering the implications, reflect miserably on the initial results of "taking over the British Empire." A staggering budget, ceaseless deficiency bills, more arms, more soldiers, high taxes, more bureaucracy -- it's not a pleasant prospect.

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Popular pre-occupation with Republican troubles has obscured a fact of no pleasant import to the Democratic Party. An AP dispatch from Chicago (February 26) reports that the mayoral primary and aldermanic elections showed a weakening Democratic hold on that city's administration. "Although the returns showed Mayor Edward J. Kelly's Democratic machine still was a formidable vehicle, the party's showing was the weakest in twelve years" and "the biggest shake-up in the Chicago City Council in recent years loomed" as a result. The Democrats won "only twenty-three of the fifty city council posts outright, compared with their present strength of forty." Meanwhile, New York's Tammany Hall has changed leaders; and behind closed doors in National Headquarters in Washington there is dissension over the determination of party policy to be followed in the next few years.

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The immediate economic effects of the Supreme Court decision against the United Mine Workers are reassuring. The Court action makes remote the possibility of a strike in April. The mines are scheduled for return to the owners in June and summer will be an unpropitious time for laying down tools. Hence, so far as coal is concerned, a clear course for production is forecast until next winter.

Still the long range effects of the decision inspire some grave doubts. To many observers the Government seems launched on a policy of injunctive procedure in labor disputes -- a procedure, it is recalled, which lowered the dignity and position of the courts and contributed to labor unrest in the forty years preceding the passage of the Norris-La Guardia Act. Although the Court decision only approved the injunctive procedure in the case of Government-owned or seized properties, the temptation to widen the scope of such a successful method of combatting strikes will be strong.

While many employers welcome such measures, some realize that the continuing use of Government seizure is double-edged. Rank-and-file labor now seems quiescent. But the mood may change, with a resultant change in the attitude of politicians. The situation might then revert to that existing during the war when the Roosevelt regime used seizure for the benefit of union wage claims. Return of properties might well be protracted, and in some cases might result in outright nationalization. John L. Lewis' utterance, the day following the Court decision, to the effect that the right to strike should not be limited by Government may at present seem doctrinaire to many. For those whose ideal is a free economy, it is based on a sounder philosophy than Chief Justice Vinson's opinion.

The dissenting opinions can hardly go unheeded. Justice Frankfurter made an effective case that the intent of Congress was not to exempt the Government from the Norris-La Guardia anti-injunction act. Justice Murphy said in his dissent: "A judicial disregard of what Congress has decreed may seem justified for the moment in view of the crisis which gave birth to this case. But such a disregard may ultimately have more disastrous and lasting effects upon the economy of the nation than any action of an aggressive labor leader in disobeying a void court order." And Justice Rutledge said: "No right is absolute. Nor is any power, governmental

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or other, in our system. There can be no question that it provides power to meet the greatest crises. Equally certain is it that under 'a government of laws and not of men' such as we possess, power must be exercised according to law."

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Secretary of State Byrnes did not resign last January; he was fired by President Truman -- so runs a story related by Democratic friends of Byrnes. The facts, say these sources, were hushed up at the time because publication would have had a bad effect abroad and might have stirred up a hornet's nest in the Democratic Party. It is true that Byrnes had intended to leave his post some time during 1947, but only after the Moscow Conference; and it was true that he had offered to resign in 1946. But actual departure was brought about by an incident a few days before his "resignation." Friction had developed between him and Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson. Byrnes gave Truman an ultimatum: "Either Acheson goes or I go," and expected that the President would dismiss Acheson. But Truman, who had wanted Marshall for Secretary at least since the spring of 1946, seized this chance and abruptly accepted Byrnes' resignation. This story, which is gaining credence among informed circles, would serve to explain the mystery which has surrounded that sudden and unexpected shift in the State Department.

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A private letter from a newspaper correspondent in Rome offers an interesting view of the disturbed Italian situation: "Prices are high, the economic situation is bad and the political situation bad also. The currency is fantastic, as in so many countries where inflation has occurred. Yet the mass of the Italians seems to be working hard and shows more grit than the French. They apparently are determined to make the wheels of the economy go round. To many visitors this is a mystery. But I think that one factor, the bambini, is at the bottom of the puzzle. Despite the growing hardships of family life, the children keep coming. They are always welcomed. I heard one man say, 'My wife just gave birth to a child. I don't know where I'll get the means to feed it. But I am very proud to be a father.' His smile showed that the pride outweighed the worry. I have noticed that anti-Communist posters exploit this feeling, 'Don't believe the Communist promises. If they get power, they will take all the bambini to Siberia.'"

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The New York State Department of Labor last week said of Allen Rucker's Tool Owners Union: "No more Fascistic organization with all the potentialities for undemocratic action and danger to our way of life has come before the board," and denied the Union the right to operate in New York. Now, we are not enthusiastic about the Rucker movement. It seems a well-meant but rather synthetic attempt to marshal opinion against the all-too-frequent torts of organized labor. Mr. Rucker is an advertising man, with all the cleverness that implies. The idea of organizing stockholders, business partners, individual owners, etc. to uphold the rights of property against the Wagner Act is ingenious. But in view of the long record of stockholders' failure to prevent the depredations of management and minority interests in corporations, the creation of a Tool Owners Union seems merely an anti-labor publicity device. In one radio tilt between Mr. Rucker and Mr. Louis Waldman, labor lawyer, the former seemed to us to emerge second best.

Nevertheless the New York State Department of Labor has taken a very high-handed step. How the Rucker organization could possibly be classified as "Fascistic," except by orthodox Communists, passeth understanding. If property owners have not the right to organize, it is logical to assume that property-less workers have no such right. On second thought, perhaps Rucker will now begin to get somewhere, because of this persecution. The ban on the Tool Owners Union may be worth much more to Mr. Rucker than many agate inches of display advertising.

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Notes and Quotes

From the February 20 issue of "The Gentleman from Indiana," Mr. Samuel B. Pettengill: "In Hoosier homespun, the Indiana Legislature has adopted a resolution that is easy to read, and worth reading. Here it is: 'Indiana needs no guardian and intends to have none. We Hoosiers -- like the people of our sister states -- were fooled for quite a spell with the magician's trick that a dollar taxed out of our pockets and sent to Washington, will be bigger when it comes back to us. We have taken a good look at said dollar. We find that it lost weight in its journey to Washington and back. The political brokerage of the bureaucrats has been deducted. We have decided that there is no such thing as "federal" aid. We know that there is no wealth to tax that is not already within the boundaries of the 48 states.

"'So we propose henceforth to tax ourselves and take care of ourselves. We are fed up with subsidies, doles and paternalism. We are no one's stepchild. We have grown up. We serve notice that we will resist Washington, D. C., adopting us.'"

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Premier Mackenzie King has held office even longer than did his friend Franklin D. Roosevelt. But the Verner Ottawa Letter (March 3) notes signs that the head of Canada's wartime regime may be on his way out: "The Prime Minister's health causes much concern. His current illness will prolong his absence from office; and it will be at least several weeks before he will be able to resume his seat in the House. From the angle of the Government this is most unfortunate as it may not only require some general modification of over-all policy, but may occasion an early change in Liberal leadership. It is obvious that thoughts on Parliament Hill have been turning to possibilities in this connection -- even in terms of a new Federal election before another sitting of Parliament could be called. That would depend largely upon whether Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King will find it necessary to relinquish his leadership in favour of a younger man; and in that event his successor might at the outset determine upon a sweeping Cabinet reorganization. . . . Meantime, pressures for a major tax cut increase -- even from within Liberal Party ranks."

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Clean, cool, penetrating and humane is the vision of Henry Beston as he surveys the confusion of "Insanity Fair" (Progressive, February 24): "What had gone out of American life as one sees it in the city and the suburb? Essentially, thought I, musing by the window, a sense of direction. To use a metaphor, we were all of us passengers on a great ocean liner. There is plenty of food aboard, meals are served at given hours, and all goes on much the same as ever in the usual haphazard and familiar way. On the bridge there are quarrels as to who shall steer, and powerful and secret currents seize upon the keel. The pleasant-enough days go by; people read novels in sheltered corners of the deck. The ocean, however, is unknown, and no one, not a single soul, knows whither the ship is bound. Home. Going Home. . .

"As I settle down in this familiar house, with the lamplight glowing from the windows and the great planets crossing the sky above its chimney tops, I find I am shaking off the strange oppression which came over me when I lived by an urban sense and understanding of time. In a world so convenient and artificial that there is scarcely day or night, one is bulwarked against the seasons and the year, so to speak, having no natural landmarks, tends to stand still. The consequence is that life and time and history become unnaturally a part of some endless and unnatural present, and violence becomes for some the only remedy. Here in the country, it all moves ahead again. Spring is not only a landmark, but it looks ahead to Autumn, and Winter forever looks forward to the Spring."

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